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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (12/11): Additional Funds For  
West Bank Settlements Dominates Palestinian Media

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Main Stories:  
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Settlements  
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The main story in all three dailies is Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu announcing yesterday that he will allocate an additional \$28 million to support settlements in the West Bank. The dailies quote Ahmad Qurei, member of the PLO Central Committee, reiterating that the proposed additional allocation undermines efforts of the international community to revive the peace process. Saeb Erekat, PLO Chief Negotiator, noted that Netanyahu's announcement of allocating additional funds for the West Bank settlements proves that the moratorium is only a trick to deceive the U.S. administration.

Independent daily Al-Quds runs a headline citing the Israeli grassroots Peace Now Movement that 3,492 settlement units will be established during the moratorium.

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Prisoner Swap  
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Palestinian Authority (PA) official daily Al-Hayat Al-Jadida reports that, according to well-informed Palestinian sources, agreement on the Israeli-Hamas prisoner swap is stuck on five controversial issues:  
- Israel's refusal to release 10 senior leaders, including Barghouti;

- Israel's refusal to release five female prisoners, accused of killing Israeli soldiers;
- Israel's refusal to ease its siege on Gaza;
- The length of time released prisoners would be required to remain outside of West Bank and/or Gaza following release; and,
- Israel's refusal to guarantee that it will not re-arrest or assassinate any of the released prisoners if they remain in the West Bank and Gaza.

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UNRWA Commissioner General Visits Sheikh Jarrah  
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Dailies report that Karen AbuZayd, Commissioner General of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), conducted her last official visit as the head of the relief agency, to Palestinian families evicted from their homes in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. AbuZayd expressed her sorrow for Israeli actions in East Jerusalem. Ma'an reports that Israeli police gave AbuZayd five minutes to leave the home of Al-Kurd family during the visit.

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Nobel Prize Ceremony

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All three dailies include coverage of President Obama's speech during the Nobel Prize Award Ceremony. Al Ayyam is the only daily that carries it as a front page story (below the fold). Al-Quds runs photos and an article on its back page. The article entitled, "Obama Humbly Accepts Nobel Prize and Recognizes the Debate About His Selection" summarizes the main points of the speech.

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National Reconciliation  
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Dailies and Ma'an report that according to the head of the Palestinian Reconciliation Committee, Iyad As-Serraj, talks between Hamas and Fatah could resume within days if both parties agree to a bilateral meeting.

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BLOCK QUOTES:  
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Ali Badwan, writing in Al-Quds under the title "Palestinians and Future Choices" opines that President Abbas' announcement not to run in the next elections proves that attempts to achieve a political solution to the problems in the Middle East, the Palestinian -Israeli conflict in particular, have reached a dead end.

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Palestinian Cyberspace:  
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The main issues being discussed in Palestinian social media are the EU Statement and original Swedish proposal and settler activities; attention to prisoner swap news decreased.

EU Statement: Palestinian bloggers did not explicitly attack or praise the EU Statement and the original Swedish draft; rather they focused on the positive outcomes of the final statement. In an interview on bitterlemons.com, which was later posted on Ma'an, Mahdi Abdul Hadi, head of the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA) in Jerusalem characterized the Swedish draft as: "...a wake-up call from Sweden to the rest of the European community about the status of Jerusalem today."  
<http://maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=245061>

An Op-ed by Hasan Abu Nimh, former permanent representative of Jordan to the United Nations, entitled "Another EU Policy Statement Will Not Stop Israel's Colonization" was also widely circulated. (The op-ed was originally published in The Jordan Times and published on the blog with the author's permission.)  
<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article10934.shtml>

And, an op-ed by Ghassan Al-Khatib, Director of the Government Media Center, was popular among Palestinian Twitters:  
<http://www.bitterlemons.org/issue/pall.php>.

Settler activities: Palestinian Twitters circulated several articles and videos focusing on settler activities in West Bank. Al-Jazeera's online English site reported on Palestinian houses seized by settlers: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGxF9eGzsfw>.

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Another link showed settler attacks on Palestinian properties in Nablus: <http://palsolidarity.org/2009/12/9605>.

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Cartoons of the Week:  
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To view our weekly cartoons of the week please see the links below.

EU Statement: The cartoon on this link appeared in the PA official daily Al-Hayat Al-Jadida December 9, the day after the EU adopted its statement on Jerusalem. The stars in the official EU emblem have been replaced with the emblematic Jewish Star of David to illustrate Israel's influence on the EU and its statement. Click to see cartoon

Noble Peace Prize: The cartoon on this link was published in Al-Hayat Al-Jadida today, following yesterday's Nobel Peace Prize ceremony. It is placed under the headline, "Obama Receives Nobel Peace Prize and Defends Just War." Click to see cartoon

Human Rights Day and Nobel Prize: The cartoon on this link appeared in independent daily Al-Quds today. It shows two Palestinian children asking their mother questions on the occasion of International Human Rights Day and following the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony. The child to the left asks, "Where are our [Palestinian] rights?" While the second child asks, "Where is peace? Click to see cartoon

AF/PAK cyberspace reaction: The cartoon on this link, drawn by Brazilian leftist cartoonist Carlos Latuff, was posted on the influential (popular) Palestine Think Tank site and has since been circulated by Palestinian social media. Click to see cartoon

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